

OpenOffice UI Proposal
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1 - Introduction

I use OOo for : Writer (60%), Draw (20%), impress (15%), Calc (5%)
I use a Mac since 1986 (!), so...i won't propose a ribbon :-), well maybe !

The following ideas are based on my own use of OOo, but also from what I heard from others users, beginners.

My ideas follow those of Mac OS : it has to be obvious !

I know my written english is not very good, I hope it won't be too difficult to read.

2 - Fundamentals ideas

2.1 - Final-Document oriented

Depending on the type of document I work, I need a subset of the tools available in OOo.

But OOo proposes only basic types of document : word processing, spreadsheet, slideshow, drawing...

OOo should propose more detailed type of documents, and adapt the UI : that is, show only the tools needed for each type of document (cf next point).

For example :

Writer

- 1 page simple letter
- business document
- scientific document
- Thesis
- mailing, labels, envelopes
- publishing
- web
- ...

Calc

- financial document
- scientific document
- Canvas/ Grid - Editor (cf <http://wiki.services.openoffice.org/wiki/>)

Impress

- slideshow
- (well, I see no other type of document..)

Draw

- 2D
- 3D
- UML (in future ?)
- CAD (future ?)
- ...

All those type of document might be available when the user choose "New..."
of course, a default document would still be available, with default tools associated.

2.2 - « tools on demand »

2.2.1 - presentation

(This is related to previous point)

OOo has so much functionality that it's not possible to use them at the same time
OOo should provide a subset of tools needed only at the current time
...but you can answer: it's already possible today with toolbars !
Well, still too complicated : i propose something going farther :
we can define the kind of tools available for each component

For example :

Shared

- templates
- macros
- forms
- media (image, video, OLE)
- drawing tools
- diagrams, flowchart, orgchart (future ? <http://graphics.openoffice.org/development/projects.html> and <http://specs.openoffice.org/draw/orgchart/OrgChart.sxw>)
- autocorrect
- data sources
- gallery

Writer

- mailing
- versions
- index and "table des matières" and bibliography
- advanced positioning of objects
- headers & footers
- table

Calc

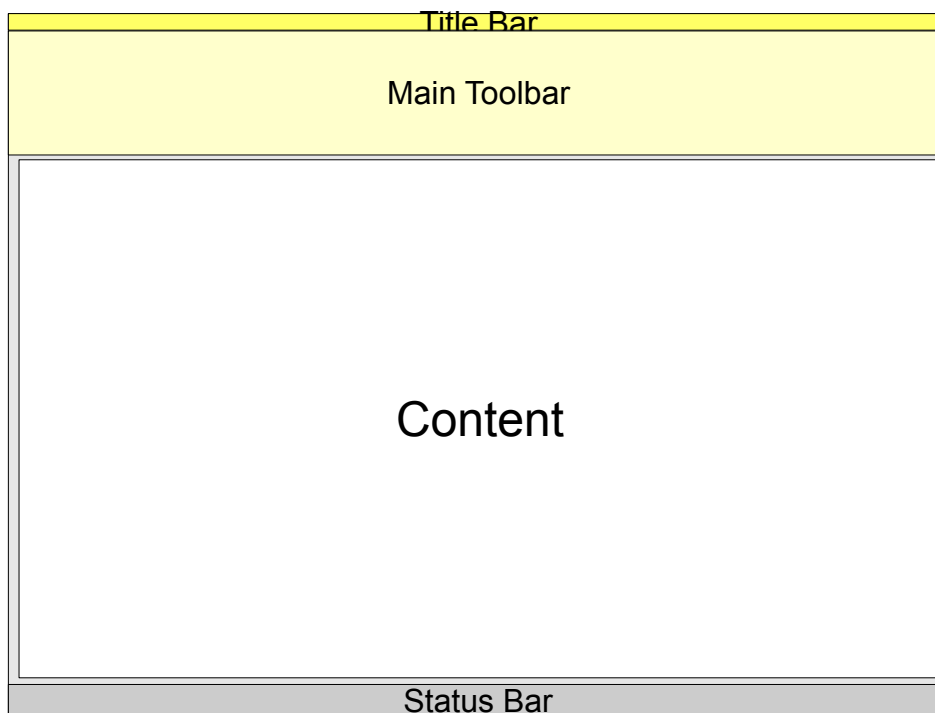
- **TODO**

Impress

- **TODO**

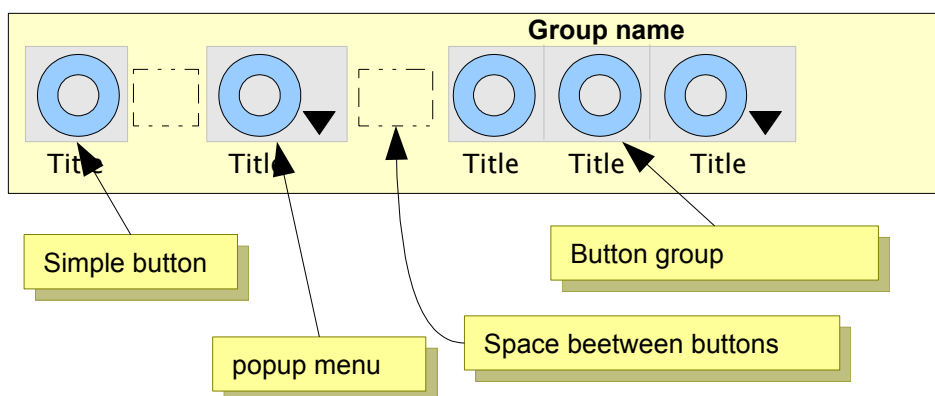
2.2.2 - Management of main toolbar

The idea is to have one main toolbar for each software (Writer, Calc, Impress, Draw, Base...).
This toolbar can not be hidden nor moved.
She is horizontal and on the top and of fixed size.



the content should stay simple : 10 “buttons” maxi. (10 is not an absolute value, but it gives an idea : it also refer to a rule about memorization : a list should contains from 5 to 9 elements).

By “button”, I mean a real button, a popup menu, or a group button. There should be some blank space to visually separate them.



The size of each “button” should adapt to the size of the toolbar, which is related to the screen size. For small screen size, space between buttons should be reduced, and for very small screens, button size should be reduced

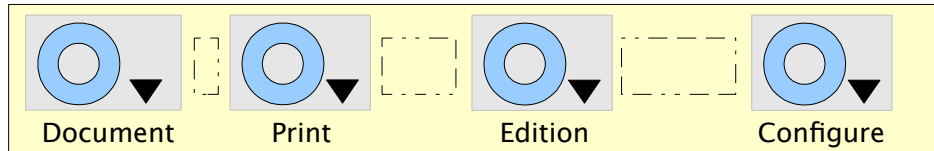
It would be interesting to use some svg icons for standard and large sizes, and bitmap icons for small sizes

Every button should have a name/title, maybe under the icon. A group should also have a name/title, maybe above the icons...?

The popup menu maybe a standard menu or specialized (grid of icons for example), but should require very simple mouse gesture (a single clic ; absolutely no mouseover nor sliding...)

2.2.3 - Default buttons in toolbar

A first reflexion brings a list of default buttons : they'll be in every main toolbar (writer, calc, impress, draw...) : « Document », « Print », « Edition », « Configure »



And the items would be :

- Document :
 - New
 - Open
 -
 - Save
 - Save as
 - Save a copy As
 -
 - Export
 - Export as PDF
- Print (*should find something different but no idea...*)
 - Printer parameters
 - Print preview
 - Print
- Edition
 - Undo
 - Redo
 -
 - Cut
 - Copy
 - Paste
 - Paste special
 - Select All
- Configure

It should be equivalent to today's "Option" menu item . But should it be a single button or a popup menu ???

I suggest that it stays always on the right side of the toolbar.

This list is still in early stages of reflexions !

Any modification/enhancement are welcome !

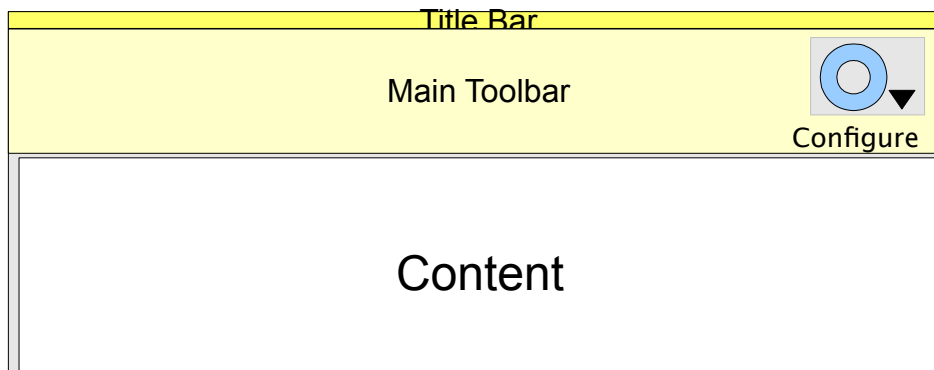
For example, I still can't say if management of templates should always be in the "Document" button, or in another button "Template", or be proposed as a complement to the main toolbar...

you can have an idea in the next mockups ("adding toolbar").

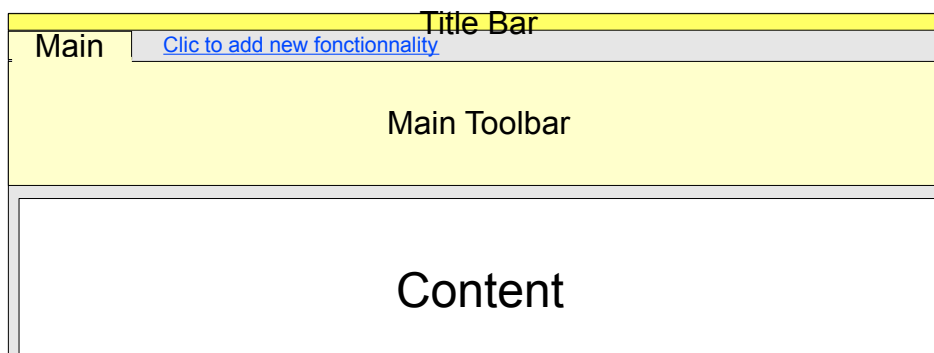
2.2.4 - adding toolbars

In the main toolbar, there should be a special button that allow the user to enhance his UI : a dialog appears that lists the others toolbars

That special button could be "inside" the "Configure" button :

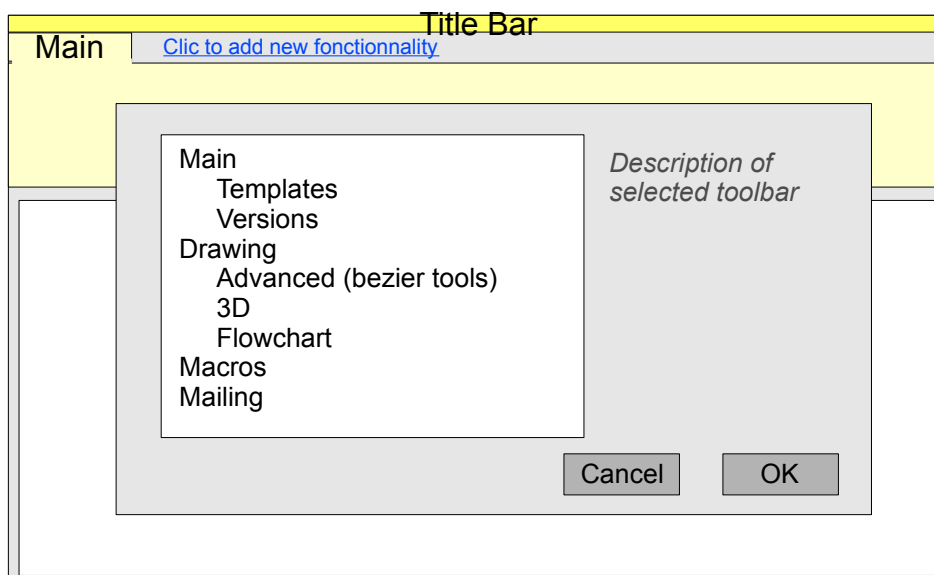


Or, if we consider that the main toolbar is always drawn like a tab, we can use the empty space next to the tab's name :



Finally, I find that second proposition more interesting : it's very clear, users don't have to guess ("where is that **** tool ???") because it's explicitly written.

So, a panel should appear, with the list of available toolbars :



The panel should indicate which toolbars are already visible with checkboxes, it may allow to add several toolbar in one clic...

we can imagine that the list has 2 levels :

the second level would be some complements or modifications to the associated first level toolbar.

For example, a first level toolbar could be "Draw", and an associated second level would be "3D objects", another could be "Advanced" (Bezier tools...).

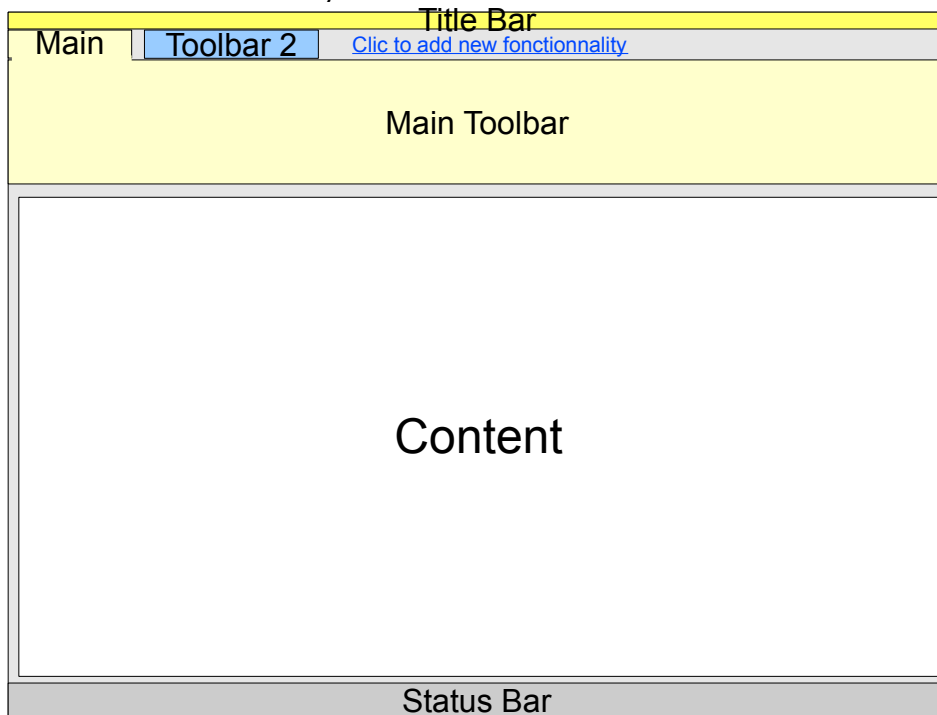
Complements could be installed by :

- adding new buttons
- modifying buttons
- removing buttons
- adding new popup menus items
- modifying popup menus items
- removing popup menus items

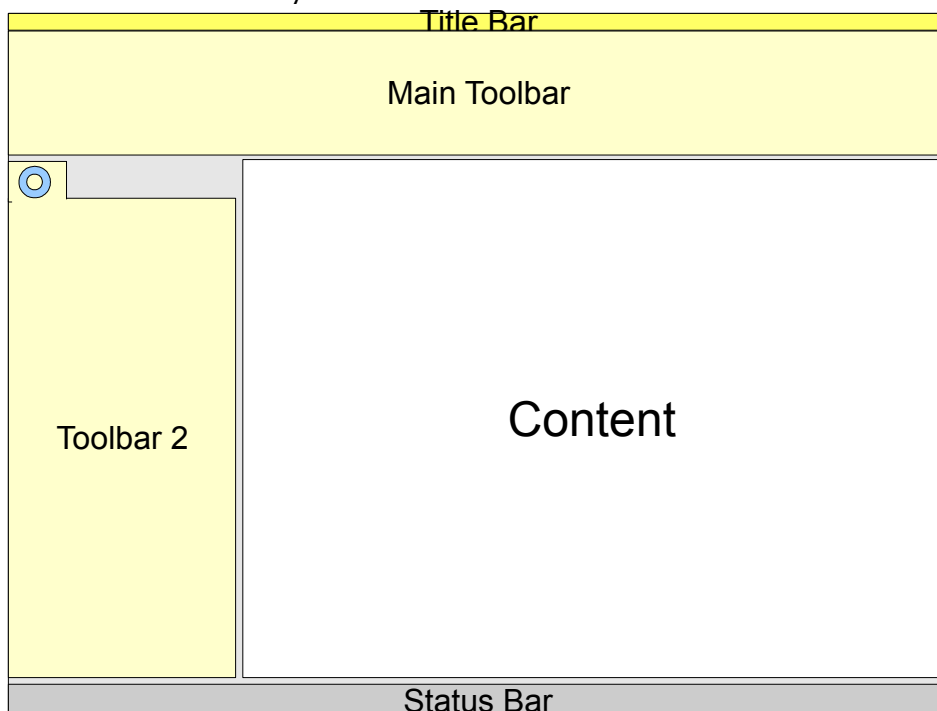
Toolbars can be added or vertically :

- horizontally : the main toolbar becomes a tab view
- vertically : a tab view on the left side of the window

toolbar added horizontally :



toolbar added vertically :

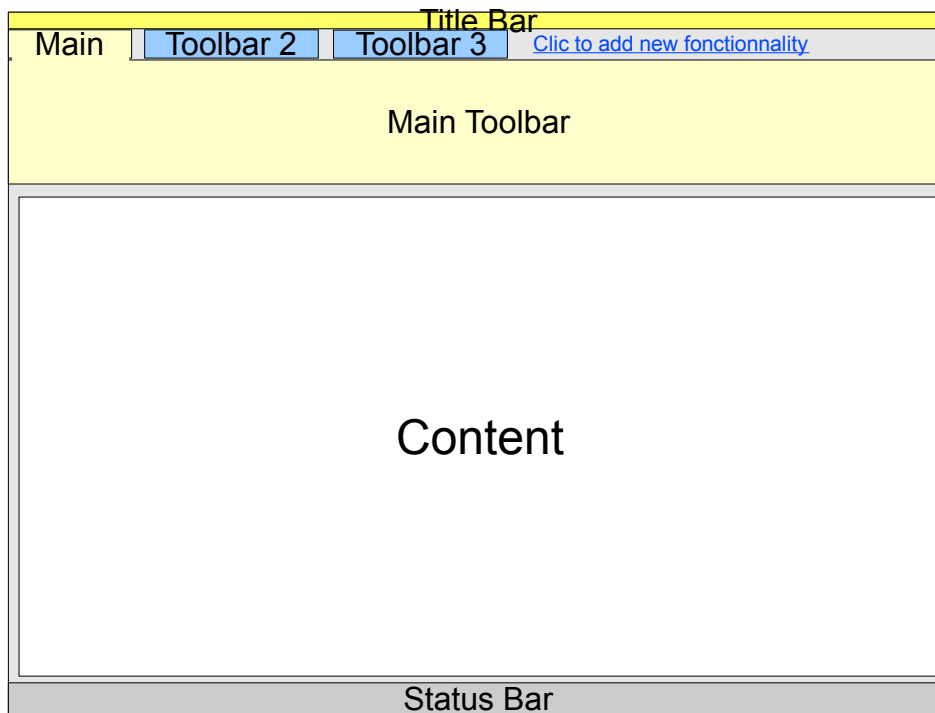


IMPORTANT NOTE :

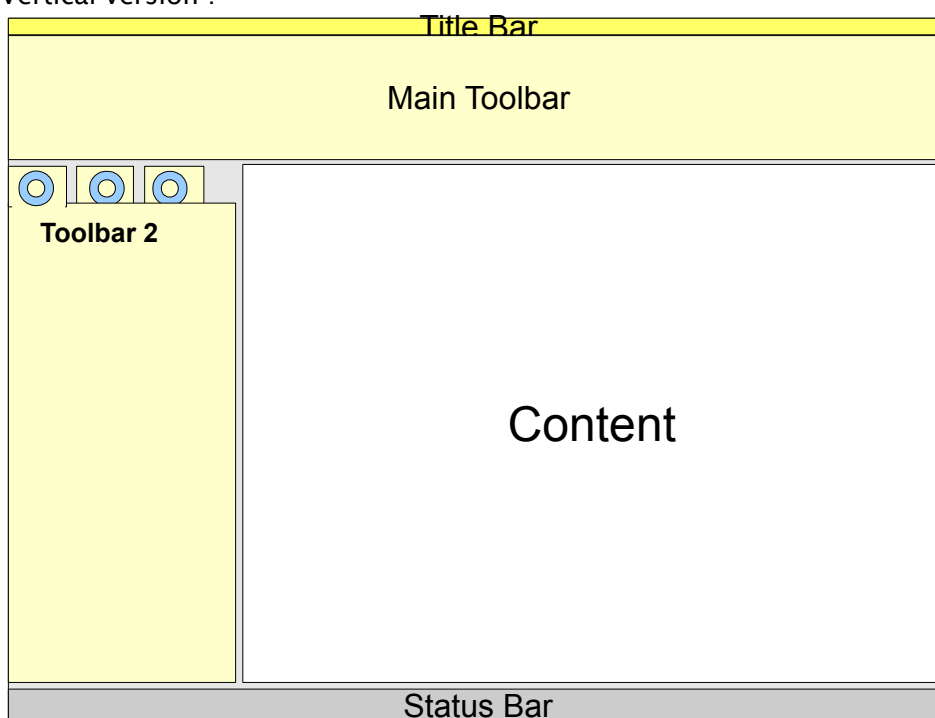
in the followings mockups, the main toolbar for vertical version has not a tab name : it's not a design decision, it's just a lack of time to modify the mockups...
It may be a subject of discussion : should the main toolbar have a tab ?

2.2.5 - multiple toolbar for small or standards screens

As the user adds more toolbars, they stay in their tab : it is ok for small or standards screens



Vertical version :



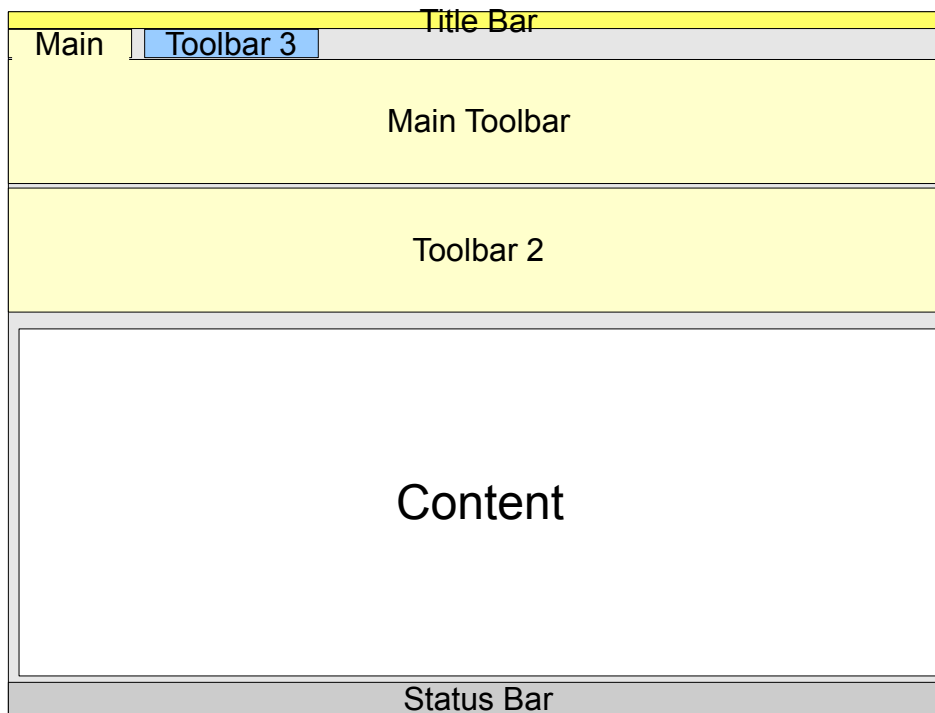
for the vertical toolbar, the tab shows only icons. They adapt their size to the width of the tab.

The name of the toolbar is under the chosen icon.

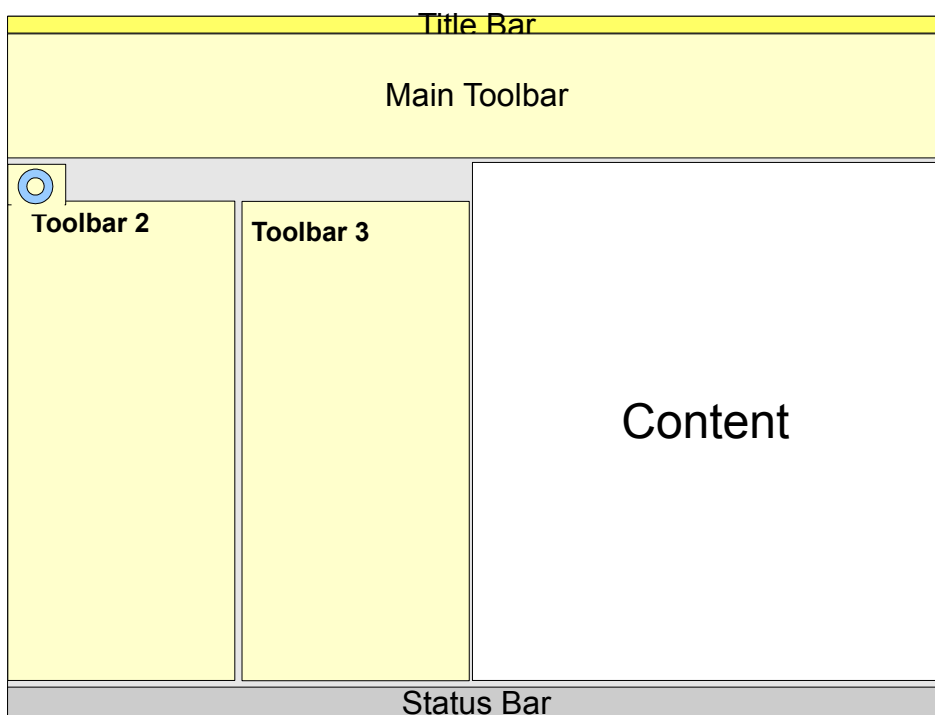
2.2.6 - multiple toolbars for big screens

An option for big screens would be to allow some toolbars to have their own panel : a right clic and a context menu would allow to “detach” a toolbar

Horizontal version :



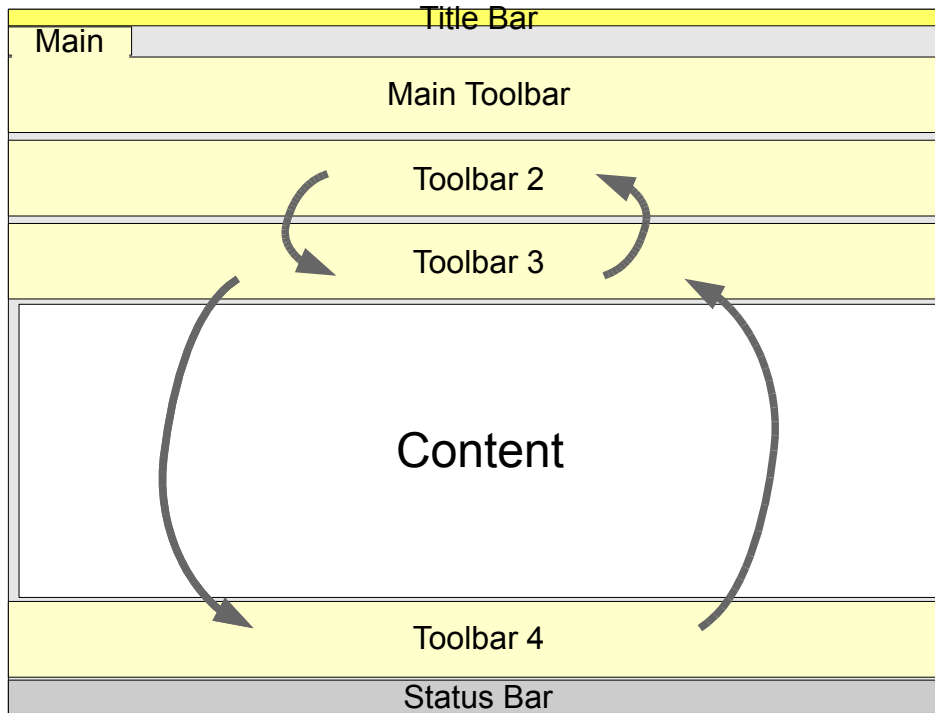
Vertical version :



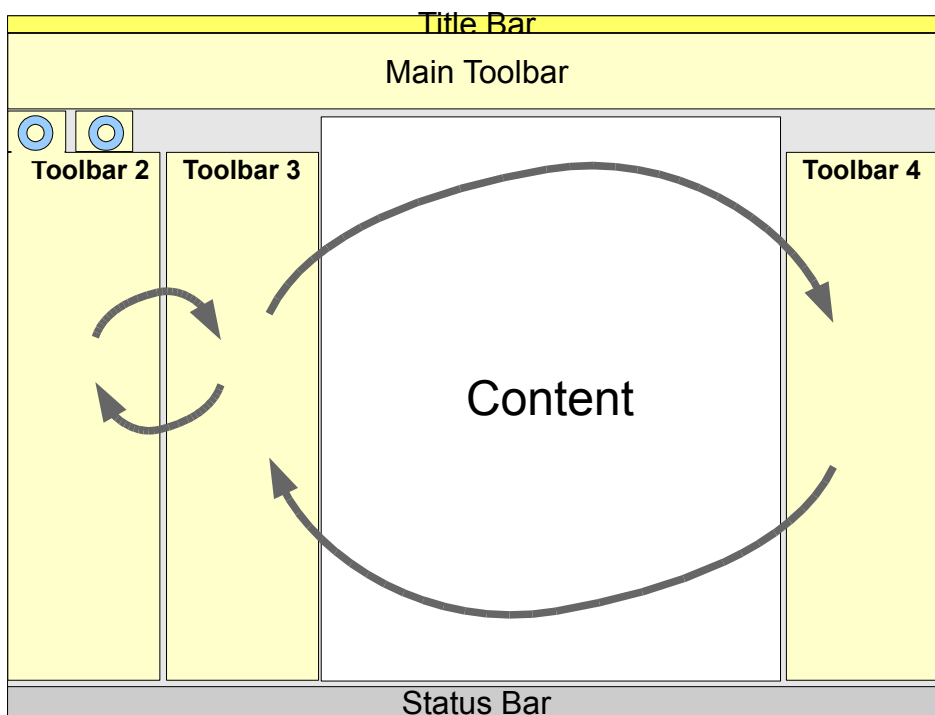
a detached toolbar could be attached again through the context menu.

2.2.7 - reorganize toolbars

After that, it would be possible to move horizontal toolbar up or down, and vertical toolbars left or right, with the context menu of each toolbar :

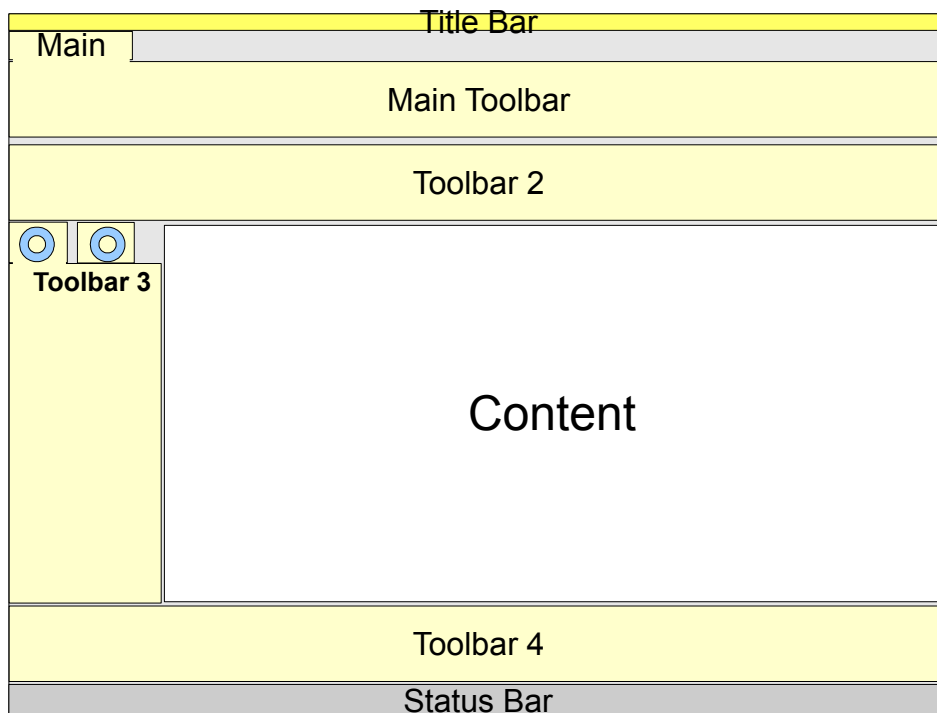


Vertical version :



2.2.8 - Horizontal and vertical toolbars

Finally, users with big screen sizes should like the possibility of mix :



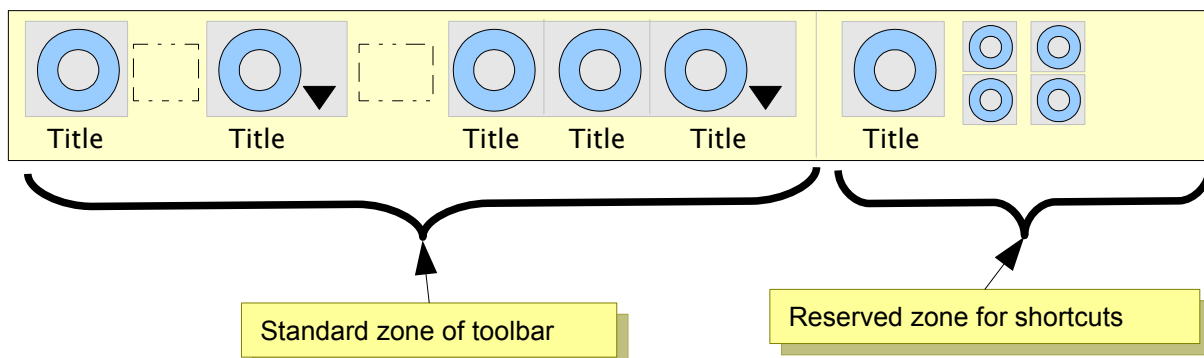
2.2.9 - Context menu for toolbars

Here is a example of context menu for toolbars :

- Detach
- Attach
- Transform horizontally (or vertically)
-
- Move up (or Move left)
- Move down (or Move right)

2.2.10 - Enhancements for toolbars

Power-users should be able to customize their toolbar by adding shortcuts in a reserved zone of the toolbar. Shortcuts would be only single buttons (no popup menu.) and they could be in different sizes : standard or small.



2.2.11 - Properties panel

I suggest to separate the functionality of “actions” and “properties”.
The “actions” should be in toolbars, and properties should be in another panel.
It would be a kind of “inspector”.

The toolbars :

- are always visible, it's up to the user to show or hide them
- have always the same content
- their content is almost buttons : they allow to perform “actions”

example : “add a line in table”

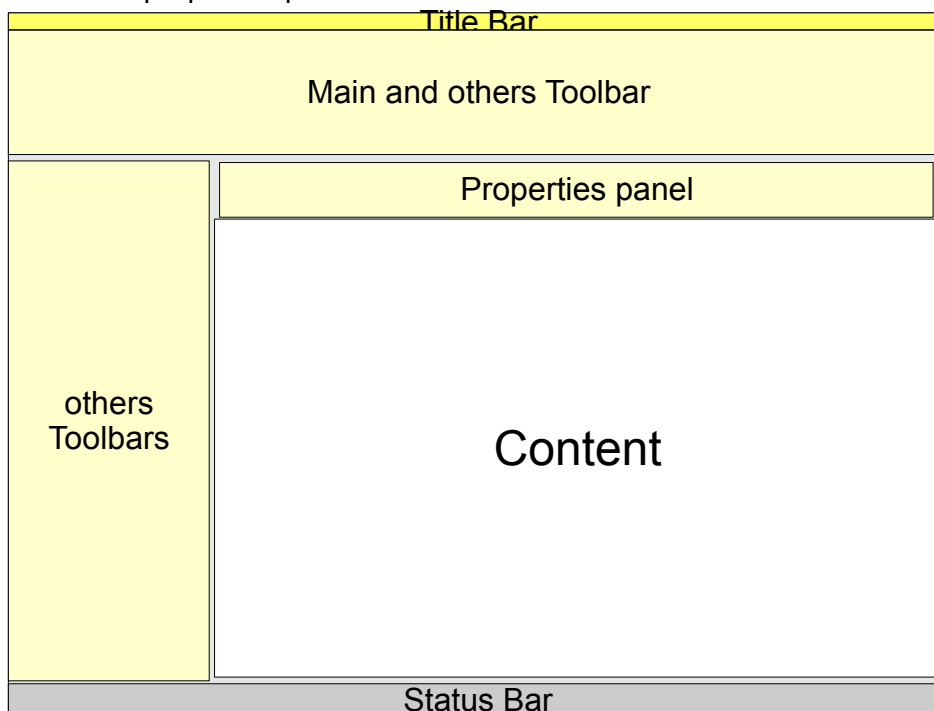
That properties panel :

- is context-sensitive : its content change according to the selected object
- their content allow the user to change the properties of the selected object

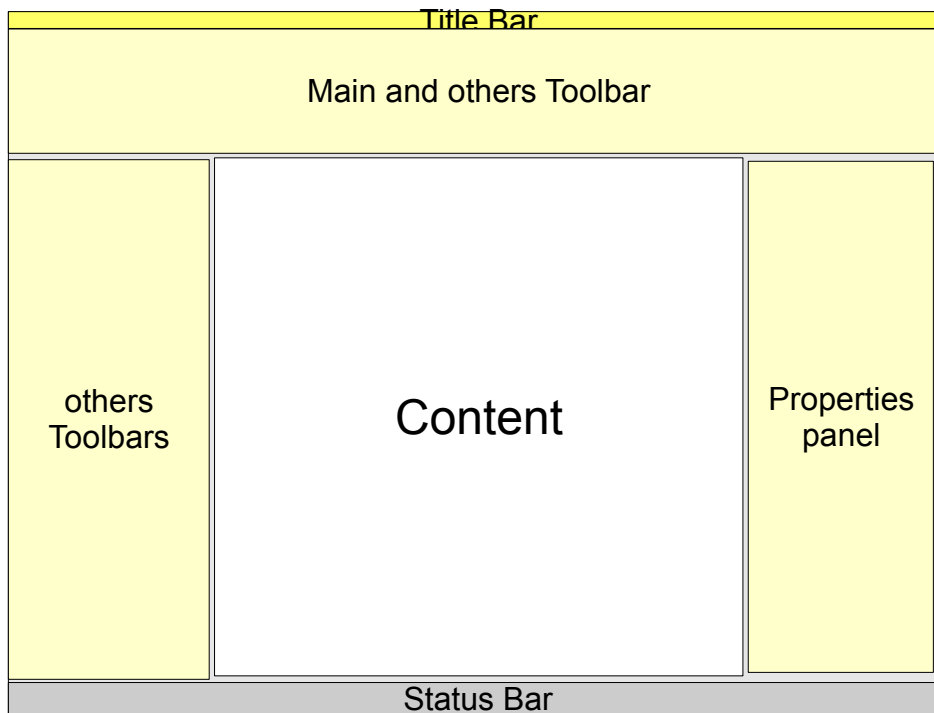
example : “change border of selected cells of table”

The properties panel should stay beside the content, but could be horizontal or vertical.
It should work as an inspector : no need to validate change, no modal behavior.

Horizontal properties panel :



Vertical properties panel :



For example, the horizontal properties panel for text would be :



the vertical version could be more detailed...

2.2.12 - Important question about selected objects

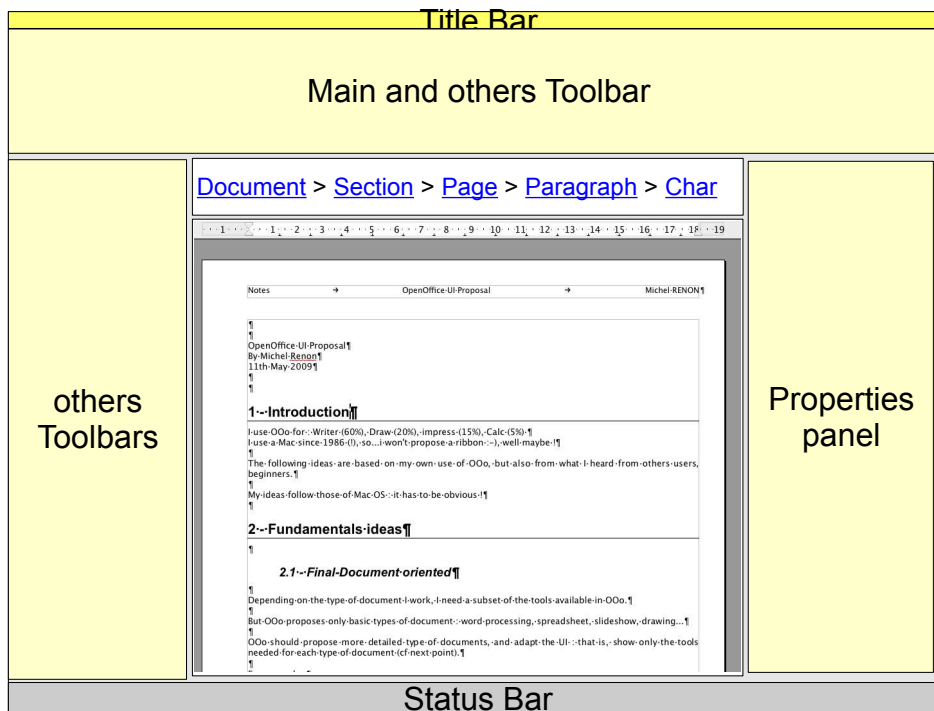
When working with properties panels, I taught “if the selected object is a character in Writer, how can I modify properties for the paragraph, or the page or the whole document ?”...

We have a hierarchy of objects, and we have 2 ways of managing their properties :

- the properties panel shows the properties of every object of the hierarchy (that's what usually done, for example in Word 2001 for Mac, or in Adobe software IIRC)
- we provide the user a way the view the hierarchy and to select one object : the properties panel shows only one object.

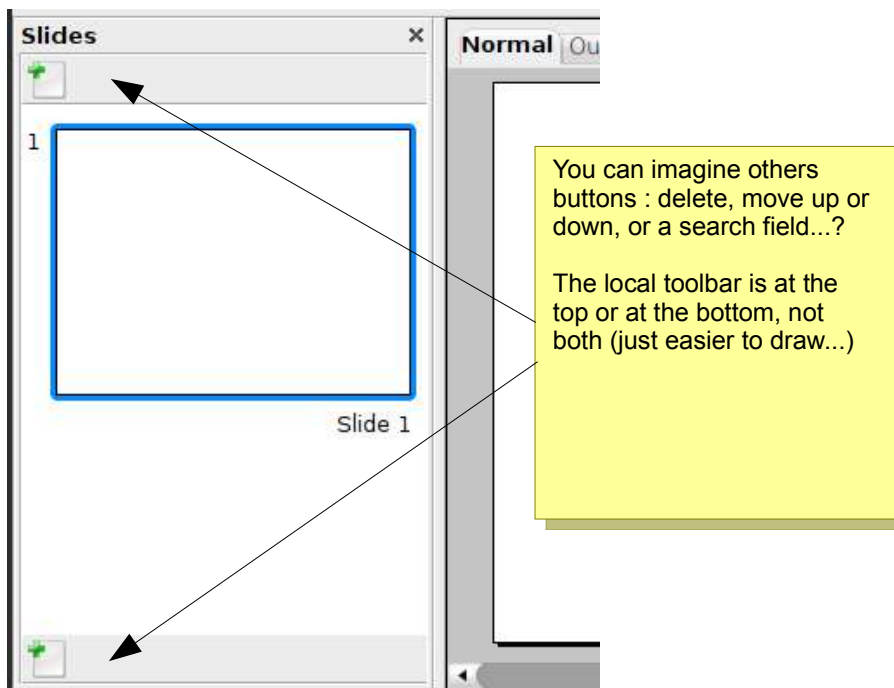
The second way interested me : and if we provide a kind of “breadcrumb” ?

It could look like that for a writer document :



2.2.13 - Local toolbars

In some very special cases, I suggest to use local toolbars :
for example, in Impress, under (or above) the slide list, there should be some simple toolbar, with “add slide”, “delete slide” buttons.



2.3 - Important question about MenuBar and Tabs

One of the hottest subject in last months of reflexion has been “tabs for document” : that is, reuse the concept of tabs introduced by Google Chrome.

One consequence is another question : what about the menu bar ?

About “tabs for documents”, I already proposed to keep that optional, for power-users.

Some of my friends are beginners with computers and I can tell you that they don't even know that tabs exists...and if I tell them “open that web page in a new tab”, I understand they get frightened !...

It's already difficult for them to manage several windows, don't oblige them to use tabs for documents.

About the menubar...

As a Mac user, I would say “there must be one” (every Mac app must have one, even if there are only the “application”, “file” and “edit” menu)

But after the first reflexions about toolbars, i'm not sure...

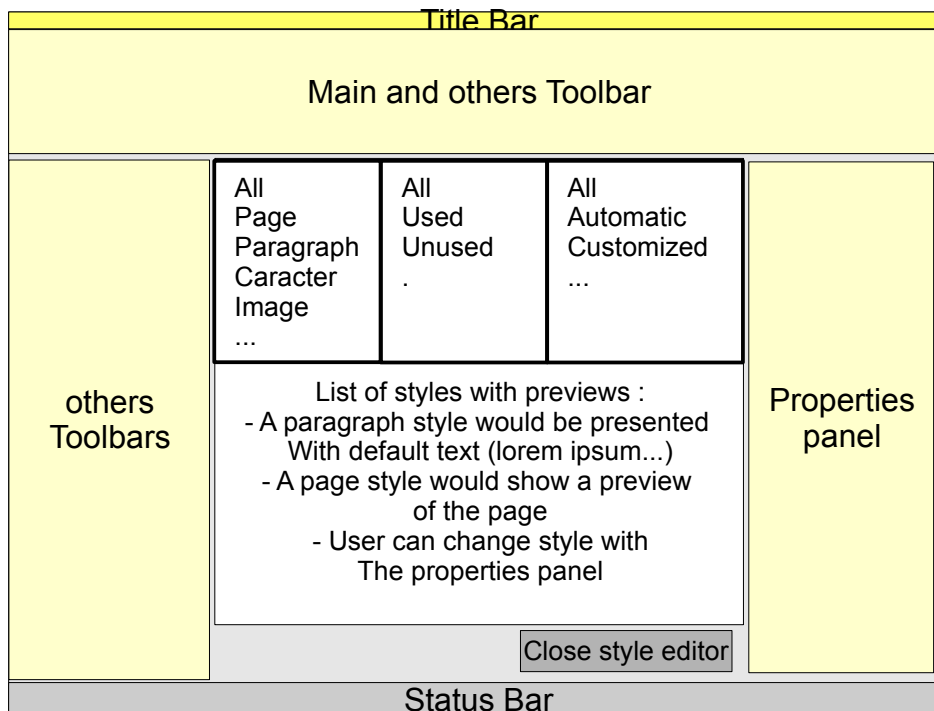
2.4 - Enhanced Styles

Important Note :

it's an idea specially for Writer, because I use a lot styles in Writer.
And I don't know if it may be useful for others...

I imagine a “style editor” that looks like the iTunes Browser !

Let's suppose there is a button “modify” just beside the “Style” menu.
When the user clicks on this button, the style editor pops :



it is a very draft idea ! It needs some polishing...

Another draft idea : is the term “style” obvious ? What if we replace it by “template” ?
We would manipulate some “paragraph templates”, some “pages templates”...

2.5 - In-window UI

I would suggest to change the UI of Search&Replace and to use something similar to Firefox.
That has already been proposed for OOo :

http://wiki.services.openoffice.org/wiki/User_Experience/DirectManipulationSnippets#Same_Functionality_For_The_Document

3 - Proposal for Impress

3.1 - Preparation

3.1.1 - Needs

From my experience with Impress, and with what I heard from other users, I suppose that most needed features are :

- add slides
- change background
- add images /videos
- add some simple transitions between some slides

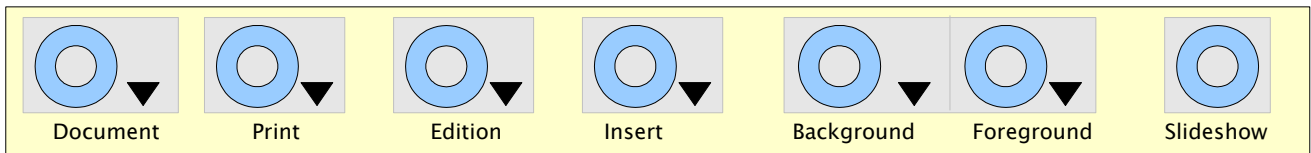
3.1.2 - Remarks on actual Impress

Here is what I find difficult with Impress :

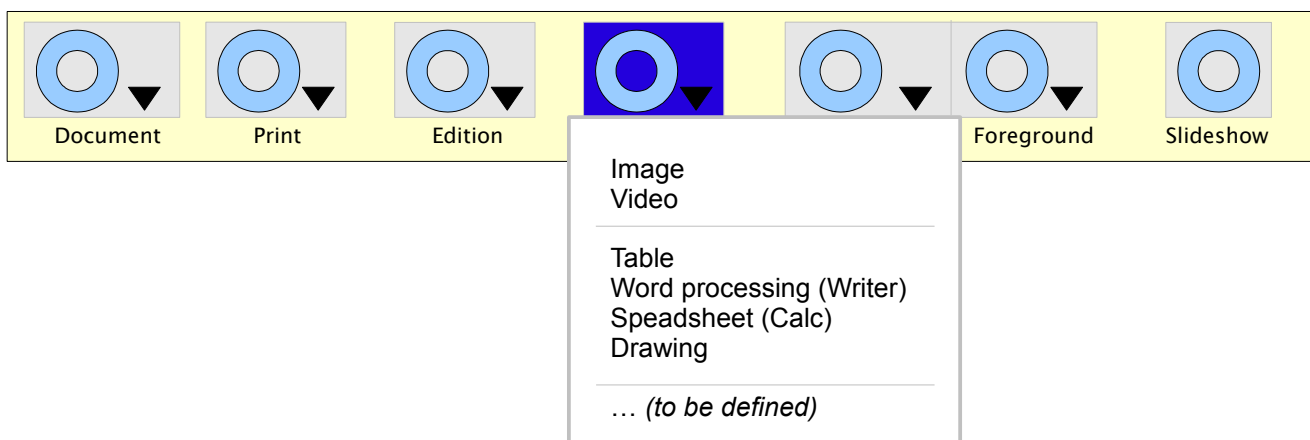
- some terms are difficult to understand and/or are incoherent :
 - the most important example is "master slide" : in the task panel, it's called "master slide", and in the "view" menu, it's in a group called "mask"...
 - the other example is "slide layout" : beginners don't find that very obvious
- the "Insert" menu is very complicated and has too many sublevels :
 - to insert a spreadsheet, you have to select "Insert" then "Object", then "OLE" and then select "spreadsheet" from a panel !
- Some very disturbing behavior (should define a bug report ?) :
 - when you modify a mask, if you clic on the tab "handout", what really happens ?
 - when you modify a mask, if you clic in one "master page" or "layout" in the "tasks" panel, what really happens ?
- for beginners, it's not obvious that you can change default text size with the "mask"

3.2 - Main toolbar for Impress

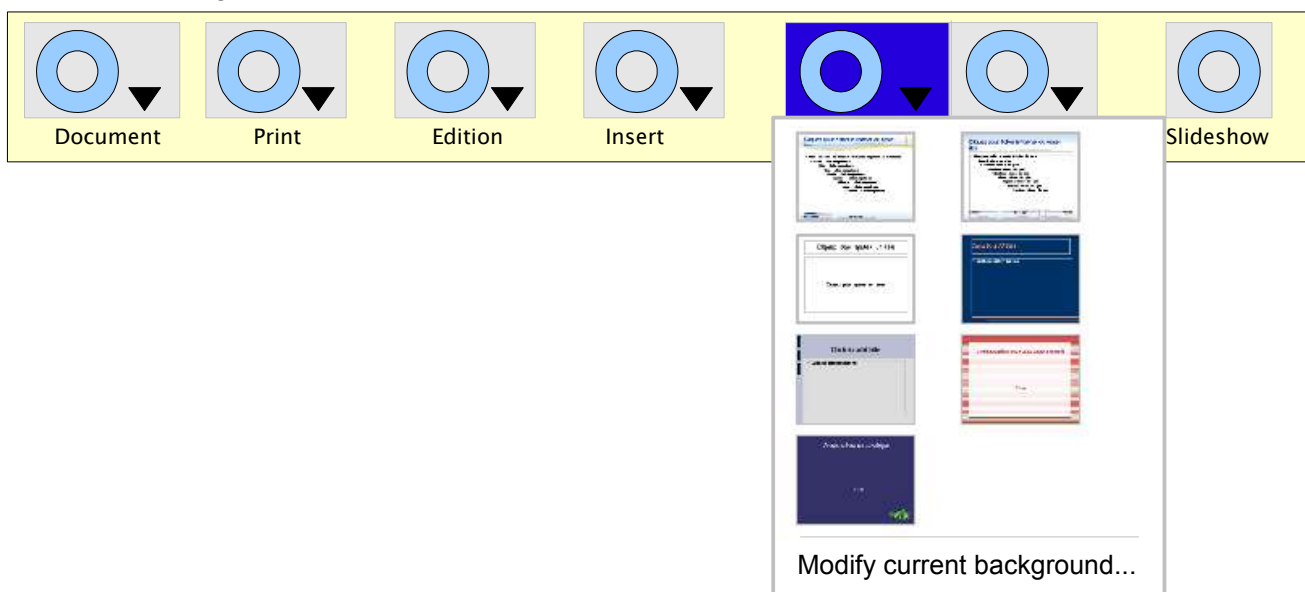
The first idea is to use terms “Background” and “Foreground” instead of “master/mask” and “layout”. Then one button would give access to the backgrounds, and another to the foregrounds :



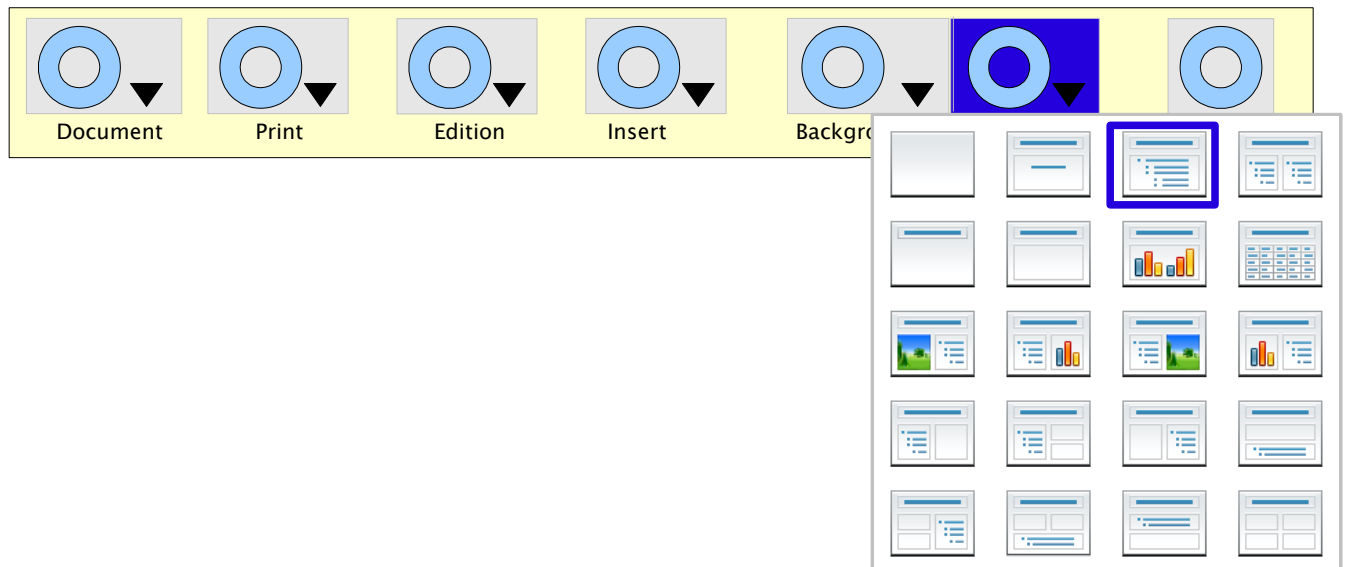
Here is the “Insert” menu :



here is the “Background” menu :



here is the “Foreground” menu :



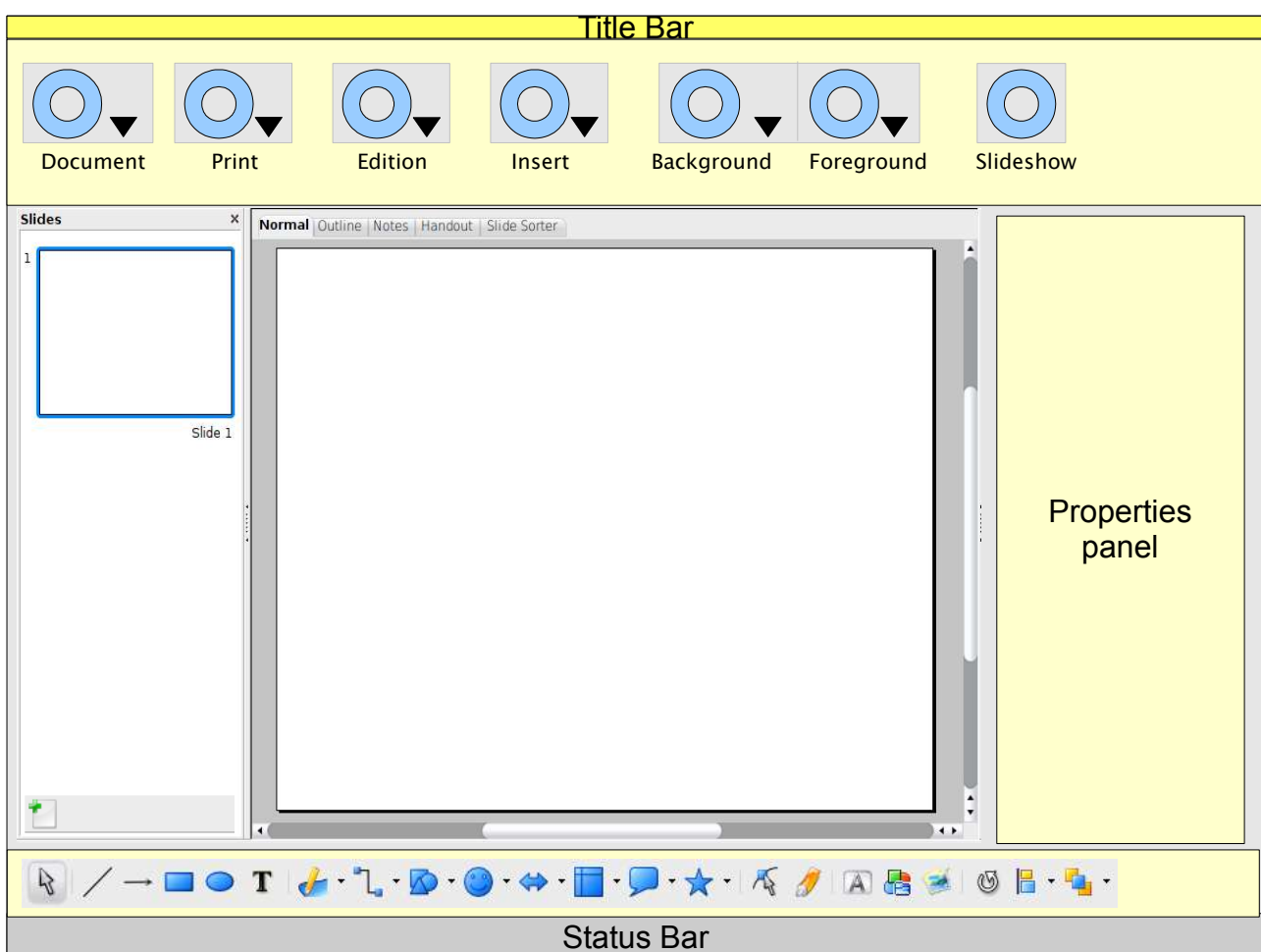
4 - Mockups of standards uses

PLEASE NOTE THAT THESES MOCKUPS DON'T TAKE CARE OF TRANSITION BETWEEN SLIDES OR ANIMATION OF OBJECTS

I'll work on theses questions if I have time and if it's necessary :-)

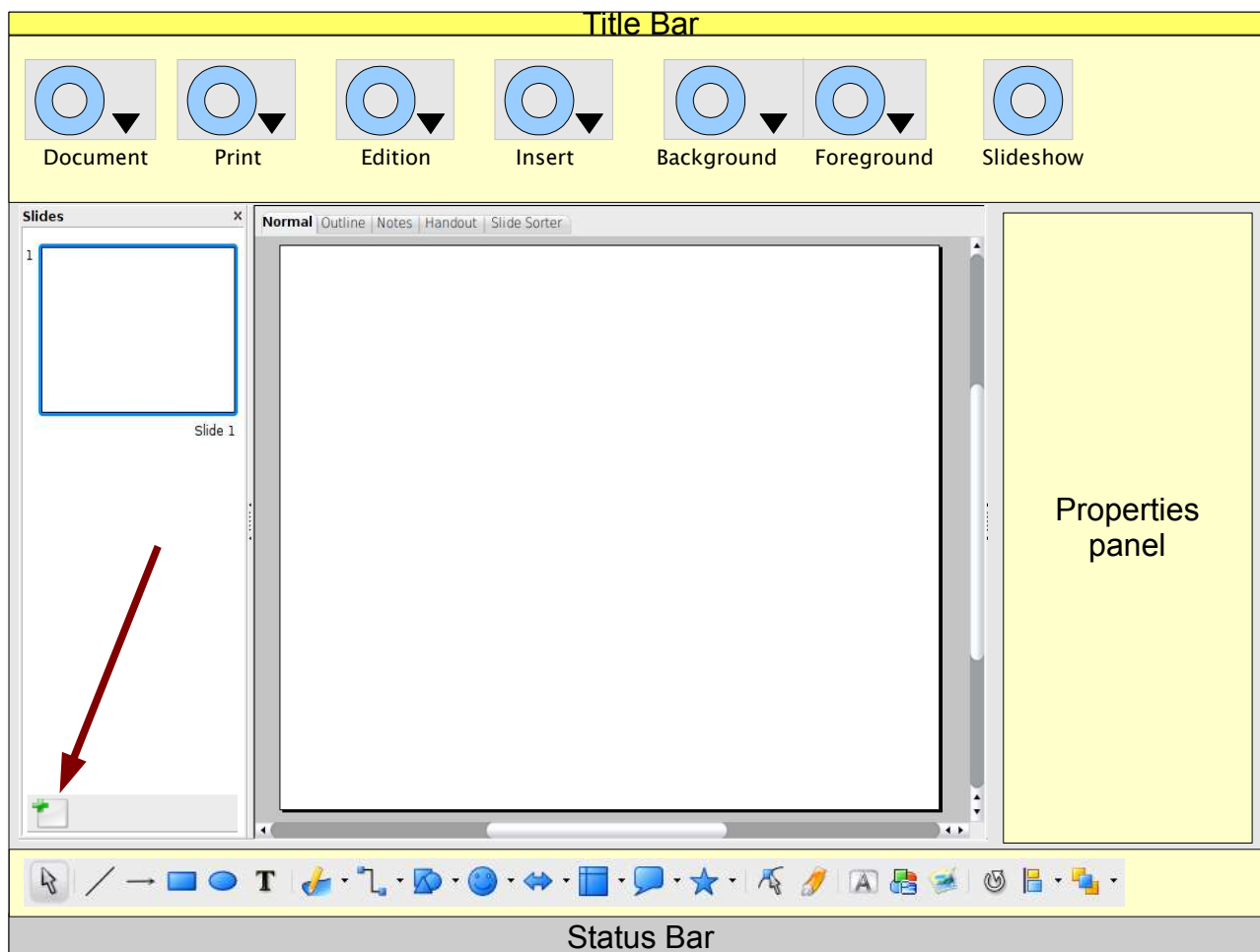
Note 2 : I had no time to define precise mockups, with right scales and dimensions. It would be the next step...

4.1 - Default screen



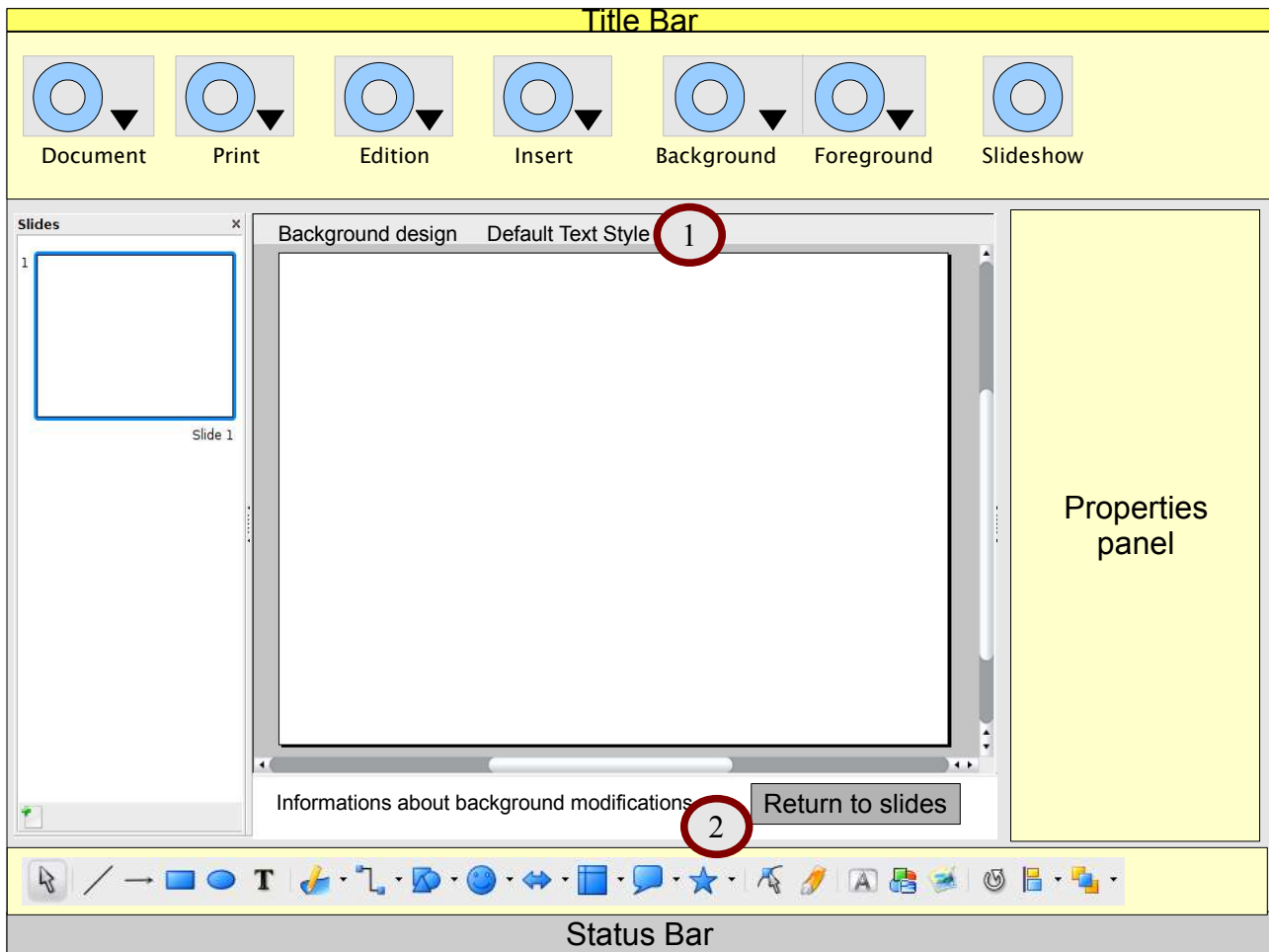
4.2 - Add a slide

Just click on the “Add slide” button in the local toolbar :



4.3 - Modify background

Select “Modify current background” from the “background” button : just like today, you enter the “background modification” mode :



But there are some differences :

- 1 : Note that there are only 2 tabs in the content view
 - “Background design” : you can draw, insert image, insert date and time fields...
 - “Default Text Style” : you just can change the default text style
- 2 : Note the special information :
 - there is a text that explains what is a background and what you can change...(and maybe a “more” link ?)
 - and there is a button that “returns to slides”, it is equivalent to the actual “stop mask mode”, but this one seems friendlier

4.4 - Insert image or video

Just select “Image” or “Video” from the “Insert” button : you'll be prompted the standard file dialog.

4.5 - Add a transition

TO BE DEFINED...